

VILA RECONCATO

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A group of people decide to "take a party of kings" to someone's house. They wait until the lights in the house go out late at night and then knock on the door, playing and singing a song which is traditional for the purpose. The owner must then open the house and let everyone in to dance and make merry. The surprise element has been removed, for it is now considered courteous to sound out the householder to see whether he would like to be the recipient of such a party, and also to give him time to prepare food and drink. The householder also has the privilege of inviting anyone he wants who might be overlooked by those who organize the party. A group of young men approached the author in the prescribed manner, and in due course all arrangements were completed. The young men were to supply an electric phonograph and records for the dancing, and the author was requested to invite the rural planters, especially those with daughters.

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A group of twenty-four planters and about a hundred townspeople, factory technicians, overseers, and a few men of urban Class C came to the party. The planters arrived in a truck a little early and entered the house, which was then closed and the lights turned off. Shortly afterwards the others arrived at the door and knocked, and the band began to play the long serenade. (A band was brought along for the song, which is an important part of the Reis; but nowadays no one likes to dance to a hometown band when records are available, so the men played only the serenade and then put their instruments away.) At the end of the song, the doors and windows were opened and the guests began to pour in.

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The rooms of the house were small, but all the furniture had been removed to make room for dancing in the two largest rooms, which were joined by two wide doors. At the beginning of the party everyone was very formal and shy; the young men remained on one side of the room, the young women on the other, and the entire planter group in a huddle by itself. Gradually things got under way, and as drinks were served to esquentar a gente (warm up the people) as many as could dance in the cramped quarters did so. For the first hour or so all the guests mingled, dancing with one another; then gradually the members of Class A began to pull away, at first beginning to dance among themselves and finally usurping a third room in which they danced away from the others, uninterrupted by anyone.

Reactions to this were varied in the days after the party

[Class C Families]

(lamancos), or perhaps leather shoes. Women wear a dress and a slip and are usually barefoot. Dress-up occasions also call for undergarments, stockings, and shoes. Great modesty is always shown about exposing oneself in front of others. Few of the men shave themselves, going to the barber for this as well as for haircuts. There are several women who are experts at hair straightening, which they do with a flat-iron, although most women and girls in this class who have the problem of straightening their hair know how to do it themselves.

In Class C as well as in Class B the father is the dominant person. He rules the household. He is the one who is served at meals, whose clothing is always clean and pressed, and who goes out the most. He spends much of his leisure time in one of the several stores, talking and taking an occasional drink of rum; or on one of the few shaded corners playing dominoes with his friends; or else in the bar playing billiards and gossiping. As a rule he goes to the movies alone, or at least without his family, although in the higher echelons of the class families often go to the movies and to church together. There is one family which is musically inclined, and which often spends evenings at home together, making up a small orchestra. If there is a samba in someone's house, many men from this class will be there watching, while the participants are usually single women and girls from the same class. The men will discuss a woman's physical attributes while she is in the center of the ring dancing. This is one of the most common ways in which a girl gets "looked-over" and is watched as she develops. Sooner or later some man will fall in love with her (apaixonar-se dela), and if she is not well guarded by her family he will eventually have an affair with her. In the case of fishermen, most of the time is taken up either by fishing or by caring for equipment, for the nets need a good deal of attention. Since the fishermen's hours follow the tides, their working hours differ from day to day. They often go to bed early, in anticipation of getting up at three or four in the morning.

The women, on the other hand, follow a more regular daily routine of getting the morning coffee ready, getting the children off to school, going for water and wood, doing the ever-present laundry and ironing, and caring for the younger children. In addition, if possible, they prepare xangô to help supplement the family income and go to the fair in Centro on Mon-

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her services ranges anywhere from fifty cruzeiros to nothing but thanks, but with the understanding that when she is ill the family will help her, since she lives alone.

If a baptized child dies before it is seven years old, it is called an angel and goes straight to heaven, while if it dies before this age and is unbaptized, it is called a pagan and goes to limbo. The angel is carried through the streets in an open coffin, for everyone to see. The lid is put on the coffin after it is in the ground, whereupon all those in attendance scoop in some earth. The attitude toward the death of a child is one of mixed joy and sadness, and sometimes of joy only. If the mother and father wanted the child very badly, they feel sad; but otherwise the general attitude is that the child is better off dead, especially since he becomes an angel. The difference in the ringing of the church bells also shows this, for the ringing for a dead child is a short, almost joyous sound, while that for an adult is a long, sad tolling.

If it appears that a child is going to die after it has been born, an effort is made to have it baptized as soon as possible. But if it is healthy, it is baptized whenever the family can do so. The baptism includes a small party for the family and godparents. Formerly, if a child died before it was baptized, its grave was sometimes baptized on the eve of São João by the woman who had been chosen to be its godmother. The family and godparents would go to the cemetery at midnight and gather around the grave, which the godmother sprinkled with water and baptized. This, however, is no longer done.

According to the parish records, 705 children were baptized in the county during 1950; 320 of those belonged to the community of Vila Recôncavo. The civil register, however, showed only 276 persons of all ages registered in the county for the same year. A child is seldom registered right after birth, or even at the time of baptism, but whenever the parents think of it. Sometimes a person must do it himself when, as an adult, he needs a registration certificate. The situation is changing gradually as life becomes more entangled in official red tape, and people are registering their children more frequently than they used to. Members of classes A and B are much more careful about this matter than are the lower classes.

According to law, the medical doctor must sign a death certificate before a permit to bury someone can be obtained, so the figures for deaths are more accurate than those for births. The civil register for the community of Vila Recôncavo

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192 [787] santo, which means literally "daughter (or son) of the saint." They prefer to refer to a person as "having a saint" (teru santo) which indicates that he has an obligation toward one of the saints and becomes possessed by him. In ordinary speech the word "saint" is used, but once the person has "made his saint" --that is, has gone through the preparatory rites and has learned the cries and dances of the divinity and how to care for him properly--it is said that the person has Orniô, or Se- te Estrelas (Seven Stars).

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776 [511] Because most of the women, and the few men in the cults, cannot spend a year, segregated in the cult house in order to "make their saint," they continue for many years in the half-way condition of someone who "has a saint but has not yet made the saint." This means that the person has experienced possession, and that it has been determined by the zelador that he is under obligation to a certain saint and is in the process of "making the saint." During this period of simply "having the saint," the person has to carry out certain duties such as feeding the saint, making the proper clothes, and buying the beads and other outer symbols of the deity which are to be used during the ceremonies. This involves considerable expenditure. The clothes are always made of silk, since nothing is too good for the saint. Today, lipstick, perfume, and cheap jewelry are competing for the few extra cents the girls have, so that it takes longer and longer to get the necessary items together. During this period, the obligations of dancing and possession are less strenuous. In the case of the Indian spir- its, the deity often speaks through the person after one or two possessions, and this is taken to mean that the spirit is firmly upon the person and may be considered "made." In this fashion much arduous work is avoided, as well as consider- able expense. This is a major reason for the growing popu- larity of the Indian saints, in addition to the fact that they are gayer.

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● 533 [465] [776] The drummers also like Indian saints, for, after they have danced, the Indian spirits usually take up a collection which is presented to the drummers for having played so well for them. The drummers are drawn from men whose wives partici- pate in the activities, or else they are men who are interest- ed in the proceedings and who like to drum. They learn the drumming early in their lives, listening to it as children when they go to watch the ceremonies. On nights when the drums are playing it is impossible for anyone not to hear the impos-

ing, exciting sounds, which continue for hours on end. Little boys pick up the rhythms quickly and soon associate each rhythm with the particular spirit who dances to it. As they grow older and show interest in it, they may be allowed to relieve one of the drummers during an interval and in this way join the others in some less important part of the ceremony, until finally the zelador feels they know enough to drum for the entire evening.

The entire proceedings are considered too strenuous for children, as much for the boy drummers as for the girl dancers. If a small girl shows signs of possession during the ceremony she is taken away, for until she is over fourteen dancing is considered too strenuous for her. But unless her family refuses, she may be coached in all the rituals by the other dancers and the zelador. The ceremonies always draw more onlookers than performers, and outside the rural cult house a man has set up a small stand to sell refreshments. As many as can, enter the room and line the walls, while the others stand outside, looking in through the open doors and windows. Most people know the procedure in a vague way and know whom the drums are calling and who "has" which saint.

The ceremonies are rather long, the first step in the actual performance being the calling of the saints. The evening's participants dance in a circle while the drums call the various spirits. It sometimes takes quite a while for the saint to come, and there are times when he does not come at all. One young man danced unsuccessfully for over an hour and was finally removed, exhausted, by the zelador. When someone in the circle "falls," he is quickly led out of the room and into the pegi where the zelador changes his clothing, putting on him the costume of the spirit. In the meantime the others rest or may keep on dancing, becoming possessed one after the other, depending upon the type of ceremony. After the possessed person has been dressed and has completed the necessary ritual, he is led back into the main room where he now, as the saint, dances in earnest until tired or angered by something which occurs in the room. Often the zelador gives the signal for the drums to change their rhythm, indicating the end of the dance, by which time the person is physically very tired although emotionally highly keyed up. He is led back into the pegi to complete the detailed rituals, and is then given a place to rest and to come back to normal. As a rule he soon joins the others in the front room as a spectator. By

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teenth. Tapa and Haussá were spoken during the entire nineteenth-century, and the latter perhaps long before 1800. Although the Haussás were relatively few in number, their influence was considerable. The slave revolts of the early nineteenth century were, as we have seen, led by this reputedly "most intellectual element" among the imported Africans, many of whom could read and write Arabic characters. Kanúri, spoken in Bahia by the Bornús, and Grúnce, the tongue used by the slaves known as Gallinhas, are included, along with Haussá, Gêge, and Tapa, in the limited vocabularies which Rodrigues collected from Bahian Negroes near the beginning of the twentieth century.¹¹ Tahi (or Odji), Gá-(or Acrá),¹² and Mandê (or Mandinga) were also employed to a limited extent.

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As late as 1900, Negro laborers in Bahia continued to wear "white vestments of coarse cotton cloth," which reminded Rodrigues of "the Nagô *camisús*."¹³ The *Bahiana* costume,¹⁴ of partial African origin, was extensively used by the Negro women. It was also customary for them to carry their babies bound to the back with a large cloth. African dishes, in the preparation of which *azeite de dendê* (oil of the dendê palm) and *pimenta da costa* (pepper from the West Coast) prominently figured, formed a considerable portion of the Negro diet.

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At that time, also, African music might be frequently heard, particularly in the ceremonies of the *candomblé*. African musical instruments, like the *atabaque*, the *agê*, the *canzô*, the *marimba*, the *agôgô*, the *caxixi*, and the *xôque-xôque*¹⁵ were commonly employed. The fetish cult drew allegiance from numerous and zealous devotees.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 317-31.

¹² Spoken in Bahia by the Ashantis.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

¹⁴ The *Bahiana* costume is described in detail in chap. ix.

¹⁵ These instruments are described in chap. ix.

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to her," romances written.⁵³ Of 146 male students responding to the query, "All things being equal, whom would you prefer to marry, a *branca*, a *morena*, a *parda*, a *preta*," 117, or 80.1 per cent, replied "a *morena*." Similarly, of 93 white female students responding to a like question, 80, or 86 per cent, preferred a *moreno* for a mate.

The *morena* may, or may not, have African blood.⁵⁴ But at least in Bahia this category includes many individuals of partial African descent. For instance, a study of five hundred women classified as *morenas* in the Gabinete de Identificação indicated the probable distribution given in Table 7.

It is the opinion of Arthur Ramos⁵⁵ that, although "the charms of the *morena* exert a profound sexual attraction" and the regard in which she is held "has a sexual base in the Freudian sense," the present attitude toward the *morena* "grew out of the enthusiasm and the sentimentalism of the abolition campaign. The *morena* expresses in a symbolic way the union of the two races—the black and the white—and the absence of [caste] prejudice."

The *morena* probably constitutes a decided bond be-

⁵³ As, for example, the following:

Beautiful *morena*,
Morena,
Morena who makes me suffer!
The full moon, so bright,
Is not as luminous as your eyes.
You are a *morena*,
A wonderful girl.
There's not a *branco* who hasn't
fallen for you.

Often,
When you pass by,

Men quarrel over you;
Everyone eagerly anticipates
Your smile.

Your heart is a boarding-house,
A family hotel
Along the seashore.
Oh, *moreninha*, do not rent all!
Leave at least a corner
For me to live in!

⁵⁴ A rock on the island of Paqueta in Guanabara Bay at Rio de Janeiro very popular with young lovers, has been dedicated to the *moreninha*.

⁵⁵ Pronouncing the word *morena* (or *moreno*) with a certain emphasis or changed inflection indicates darker color.

⁵⁶ Stated in personal correspondence with the author.

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in pigmentation. An able lawyer, with an extended period of practice in Bahia, he was well regarded by his associates.

At a formal dinner given by *A Tarde*, probably the most influential Bahian daily, in honor of a noted journalist and poet, 15 whites, 4 *brancos da Bahia*, 3 light mulattoes, and 6 medium or dark mixed-bloods sat down together at the banquet table. Among the guests, according to the account on the subsequent day, were "all the editorial writers and collaborators of this newspaper, together with a few specially invited friends and admirers of the honored guest [a white]."

Among the members attending a session of the Bahian Academy of Letters were 5 whites, 1 *branco da Bahia*, and 3 mulattoes. One of the latter is an able poet, quite dark, with kinky hair.

Present at a tea dance given by Bahia's Girl Guides at the exclusive club previously mentioned were the city's social elite, including the governor. *A Tarde*, in reporting the event, said, "As was to be expected, there was present our best society—all of it, almost—making the occasion one of elegance and distinction." Of the 414 guests, 346 were whites, 64 were very light mulattoes (exhibiting only slight traces of Negro ancestry), and 3 were dark mixed-bloods. One of the latter, with kinky hair but Caucasian features, was accompanied by a light mulatto wife, almost white, and two light mulatto daughters. One of the latter danced once during the afternoon—with a white youth. Of 30 Girl Guides serving the guests, 3 showed slight traces of Negro origin. The only blacks present were the members of the jazz orchestra (composed of 3 blacks and 6 dark mulattoes) and 2 maids who had accompanied white families.

The president of a literary, semiscientific, and social or-

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Celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Carlos Gomes, famed Brazilian composer of the operas *Guaraný* and *Fosca*, 389 Bahians gathered in the Instituto Geographico e Historico. Of these, 316 were whites, 61 were mulattoes (predominately light), 11 were blacks, and 1 was a *cafuso*. With the governor of Bahia (white) on the platform were 12 citizens in formal dress, all whites²⁴ except the governor's bodyguard, a light mulatto in army uniform. Two young ladies in formal dress, both white, sang and declaimed. Of the 3 subsequent speakers, 2 were whites and 1 was a *branco da Bahia*. The military police band, which furnished instrumental music for the occasion, was composed of 9 blacks, 26 mulattoes, 2 whites, 3 *cafusos*, and 1 *mameluco*, under the direction of a mulatto bandmaster. Fifty students from the Instituto de Musica da Bahia sang one of Gomes' compositions. All were whites, except 2 light mulattoes.

Twenty-one women, aged eighteen to forty, were present at a cooking school sponsored by a foreign resident. A novel experience in Bahia, where for generations Negro servants have prepared the food, this school had assumed somewhat the character of a fad. The group included several ladies from upper-class families, well to do, educated and traveled. The wife of the governor occasionally attended. Present were 18 whites and 3 light mulattoes, among the latter a *morena*, perhaps the best-dressed lady of the group. Her father is deceased, and her mother is a dressmaker in moderate circumstances. The girl's beauty, pleasant manner, and constant well-tailored appearance have secured for her admittance into the upper circles. She is often invited into the "best" homes. Another of the mixed-bloods present was

²⁴ Including one *branco da Bahia*.

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that the period of time involved is much greater in the case of Carnival.

In 1936, as for some years previously, three clubs competed in presenting floats on the opening and closing evenings of Carnival. The rivalries, especially between Cruz Vermelha and the Fantoshes, are intense, the Innocentes em Progresso appearing to be rather generally admired.

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Preceding, during, and following the parade, Negro *batucadas* and *cordões* pass through the milling crowds. The *batucadas* are usually composed of fifteen to twenty young men, invariably blacks or dark mulattoes, who carry small drums, *cuicas*, and *xaque-xaques*,¹⁹ and parade in single file. The music is one toned and monotonous, reminiscent of the *candomblé* ritual. A *cordão* consists of fifty or sixty people of both sexes and all ages, invariably blacks and dark mulattoes, inclosed within a roped quadrangle, some marching, rather informally, some constantly whirling and dancing, all singing African songs and beating their palms. A banner, usually of silk and velvet, bears the group's name. It may be Outum Obá de Africa, Ideal Africano, Onça,²⁰ or some similar designation. The group also includes from ten to fifteen musicians with brass instruments, a few blacks in African costume, and a dancer bearing an animal's head (tiger, lion, *onça*, etc.). The women and the small children are usually dressed in the *Bahiana* costume, to be described in detail in a subsequent chapter.

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In a spirit of levity common to the Carnival season, one will occasionally see a group of whites and light mulattoes burlesquing the *cordão*. Encompassed by a rope, they pass through the crowd, singing, dancing, and beating their palms. In one of these *blocos*, as they are called, 16 of the

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¹⁹ See chap. 12.

²⁰ The *onça* is the Brazilian Jaguar.

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filled the churches at Mass, at prayers, and at sermons, accompanied by little black urchins carrying small stools of *jacaranda*¹⁶ with carved feet. They were women who tended small stalls in the markets, or who sold in the streets, proprietors of small eating-places, elderly slaves, and young *mulatas* who came to turn the heads of the "old conquerors."¹⁷

¹⁶A very heavy wood of rich coloring much prized for furniture.

[533] ¹⁷"Onde estão as *Bahianas*?" *A Tarde*, June 23, 1936. It was of these *Bahianas* that Carmen Miranda sang when she recently captivated Broadway with the staccato notes of the rollicking *samba* by Dorival Caymmi, "Que é que a *Bahiana* tem?"

O que é que a *bahiana* tem?
O que é que a *bahiana* tem?

Tem torço de seda, tem
Tem brinco de ouro, tem
Corrente de ouro, tem
Tem pano da Costa, tem
Tem bôla rendada, tem, ah!
Pulseira de ouro, tem
Tem saia engomada, tem
Sandália enfeitada, tem.

Tem graça como ninguém
Como ela requebra bem . . .

Quando você se requebrar
Caia por cima de mim
Caia por cima de mim
Caia por cima de mim.

O que é que a *bahiana* tem?
O que é que a *bahiana* tem?

Tem torço de seda, tem . . . etc.

Só vai no Bomfim quem tem
Só vai no Bomfim quem tem
Um rosário de ouro
Uma bolota* assim
Quem não tem balangandans
Não vai no Bomfim
Quem não tem balangandans
Não vai no Bomfim
Oi, não vai no Bomfim
Oi, não vai no Bomfim
Oi, não vai no Bomfim
Oi, não vai no Bomfim.

What is it that a *Bahiana* has?
What is it that a *Bahiana* has?

She has a *torço* of silk, she has
She has ornaments of gold, she has
She has a golden necklace, she has
She has a *pano da Costa*, she has
She has a *bôla*, embroidered, she has—ah!
Bracelets of gold, she has
She has a *saia*, starched, she has
Decorated *sandalias*, she has.

She has "oomph" like nobody else
How well she swings those hips!

When you swing those hips
Fall on top of me
Fall on top of me
Fall on top of me.

What is it that a *Bahiana* has?
What is it that a *Bahiana* has?

She has a *torço* of silk, she has . . . etc.

Only those go to Bomfim who have
Only those go to Bomfim who have
A rosary of gold,
A little ball, thus,
She who has no *balangandans*
Can't go to Bomfim
She who has no *balangandans*
Can't go to Bomfim
Oi, can't go to Bomfim
Oi, can't go to Bomfim
Oi, can't go to Bomfim,
Oi, can't go to Bomfim.

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* Instead of a cross the Maltes, or Mohammedan Negroes in Bahia, used a ball on the rosary.

OS AFRICANOS

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Although the Bahian upper classes, owing to their Negro cooks, are not unacquainted with those dishes of African origin so commonly eaten in the homes of lower-class blacks, one does not ordinarily find on their tables African delicacies like *abará*, *aberém*, *acassá*, *acaragê*, *arroz de Aussá*, *bôbô de inhame*, *carurú*, *esô*, *xin-xin*, etc., each of which is seasoned according to recipes handed down from African forebears who also extensively made use of African seasonings like *azeite de dendê*, *alarê*, *irú*, *pejerecum*, *iêré*, and *egussi*.¹⁸ The eating habits of the upper classes are, in general, European in origin. But the poorer inhabitants extensively utilize banana leaves for plates and for packaging foods and replace forks with fingers as eating accessories.

The music and dances enjoyed by large numbers of the darker population further distinguish this portion of the Bahian community. For instance, the *samba*, or *samba batida*, a regional form of the old *batuque*, although it has now been taken over by the upper classes and in a modified form become not only one of the most characteristic musical forms but also one of the favorite dances of Brazil, is still enjoyed in its primitive simplicity by the Bahian lower classes. With them it is a dance in which first one and then another of the participants enters a circle, dances a shuffling step while singing, cantor-fashion, the first line of a stanza, the others responding as a chorus. A song very popular at Mar Grande on the island of Itaparica in the bay at Bahia recalls the

¹⁸ *Azeite de dendê* is oil from the *dendê* palm; *alarê*, said to have been imported from Africa by Bahian Negroes, is a variety of pepper; *egussi* are gourd or melon pips; *iêré* are seeds similar to those of the coriander; *irú* and *pejerecum* (or *bejerocum*) are varieties of small beans. For recipes of a number of these dishes see Manoel Raymundo Querino, *A arte culinária na Bahia* (Bahia, 1928).

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labor of Negro slaves in the cane fields of the *engenhos* of the Reconcavo. The *cantador*, or leader, sings:

Olha a cana madura
Ela é verde, é madura
Para fazer "raspadura"

to which the chorus responds:

No canaviá!"

In a second chorus the solo is: "Lá vem o padre," and the response: "Pra casar vocês dois!"²⁵ In a third, the solo, "Por mim não, barbulêta," is followed by the chorus, "Você póde avuá!"²⁶

535 The principal steps of this primitive *samba* are known as the *corta-a-jaca* (cutting the *jaca*), the *separa-o-visgo* (parting the pulp), and the *apanha-o-bago* (taking out the *bago*, or edible portion).

526 *Capoeira* is often *jogado* (played) in out-of-the-way places, and at times, particularly during Carnival or at such festivals as Segunda Feira do Bomfim and Conceição da Praia, it even invades more public places. It is a highly complex form of personal combat, originally developed by fugitive slaves to enable them to compete more effectively with armed *capitães do mallo* and now enjoyed as a sport set to music. The agility of the contestants is remarkable, as they strive for points in a struggle without actual physical contact, where unexpected thrusts of the feet or elbows, rapid pivot-

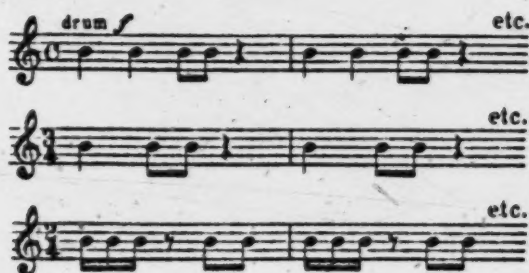
²⁵ "See the ripe cane,
It is green, it is ripe,
Ready to make *raspadura* [coarse brown sugar]
Chorus:
In the *canaviá* [roadway through the cane field]!"

²⁶ "Here comes the priest,
To marry you both!"

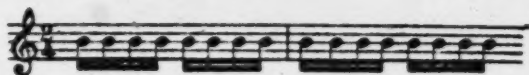
"As for me, no, butterfly,
You can fly away!"

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The *atabaques*, or drums, are indispensable to every ceremony. The heavy sound of the larger drum is intersected by the higher tones of the medium-sized and the small one. The rhythm is characterized by one-tone, interrupted syncopation and varies with each *orixá* invoked. Among the more frequent cadences noted by Arthur Ramos¹⁰ are the following:



For the occasions on which an invoked *orixá* "delays" in manifesting himself, even after the tempo of his invocation is greatly increased, there is a special rhythm—vibrant, rapid, continuous, unsyncopated—known as *adarrum*, which the followers of the cult say no *orixá* can possibly "resist." It is the following monotonous rhythm:



Although the instrumental music of the *candomblé* is quite monotonous, as is also the hand-clapping which often accompanies it, the vocal accompaniment is polyphonic. The

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¹⁰ "Os instrumentos musicos dos candomblés da Bahia," *Bahia Medica*, III (July, 1932), 194.

THE CANDOMBLE

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songs are ordinarily composed of simple sentences in the minor key, and the scale, which on importation from Africa is said to have consisted of only five intervals, now has seven.

Among the invocations sung to the various *orixás* is that given by a former *ogan* of the *candomblé* of Gantois:

Egbéji mori ô ri, okorin-kam
 Orolu mori ô ri, okorin-kam
 (Powerful One, I know thee as the first man)

Okum-kum biri-biri
 Ajá lê mori ô korin-kam
 (Even in the dark I can see thou art powerful)

A orêrê aiê, orixá loman,
 Iá, ochê Egbéji orêrê, aiê
 (In the whole world, nothing is hidden from the Great-One)¹¹

At the burial of a cult member the songs and musical instruments of the *candomblé* ceremonies are now seldom used as, it is said, they formerly were. But the casket is carried by *ogans*, and the *filhas*, in *bahiana* costume, accompany the procession. Since it is still believed that the *orixá* of the departed may at this time seek a new *cavalo*, no pregnant woman attends. "Possession," however, may and does occur. Thus, at the burial of an elderly Negro woman, a *filha* of Ogun from the *candomblé* of Engenho Velho, who had been "made" for thirty-three years and was widely known and respected for her knowledge of African ritual, two *filhas de santo* were "seized" as the procession wound its way up the steep ascent to Quinta dos Lazaros Cemetery, and another later as the crypt was being sealed. In each case "possession" began with light weeping which soon increased to loud sobbing, the individual meanwhile pressing her hands

¹¹ Manoel Querino, *Costumes africanos no Brasil* (Rio, 1938), p. 108.

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794 girl carries in her hand the insignia of Oxun, a *leque* (fan) of brass decorated with a star.

794 All the other dancers, except one, are dressed in the
 796 *bahiana* costume, with wide-flowing skirts of bright-colored
 [291] cotton prints, blouses trimmed in handmade lace, and a *pano*
da Costa two feet in width tied tightly around the small of
 the back and over the breasts. One woman about thirty-five
 years of age is dressed in an ordinary street costume of
 [301] tailored blouse and skirt. Many of the dancers wear brace-
 lets of copper, brass, bronze, lead, or glass beads, often on
 both wrists and occasionally three to four to the arm. One
 dancer has five strands of cowries about her neck.

794 The priestess of the *seita*, Mãe Mennininha, is a large
 793 black woman, forty-one years of age, who has officiated in
 this *seita* for twenty-four years. She proudly speaks of her-
 self as "uma neta d'um Africano" ("the granddaughter of an
 African").

786 Every dance begins with the salutation of the *mãe de san-*
 535 *to*, which is accomplished by striking decisively the *agôgô*.

794 Immediately the drums take up the rhythm. The *filhas* be-
 796 gin to dance, the circle turning like the rim of a wheel,

[576] counterclockwise. The women have their hands clasped be-
 • [533] hind their backs, their shoulders are hunching backward and
 forward, their bodies bending at the waist from side to side.

One of the Oxun initiates moves with a halting, jerking
 movement, then suddenly pivots a complete turn. All the
 dancers are singing a refrain which sounds like, "Ô-mi-á; bá-
 794 tû-lê." After some twenty minutes of continuous dancing,
 796 one of the *filhas* suddenly becomes "possessed," her eyes
 787 close, her expression becomes listless, while her neck and
 786 shoulder muscles work convulsively back and forth "in
 time to the music." Voluntary control is apparently gone,

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and she is helped around the circle by the next in line. When the music temporarily ceases, she relaxes, staggers, and appears in imminent danger of falling. Several *filhas* rush to catch and support her.

Again the *mãe de santo* strikes the *agôgô*, the leader of the drummers takes up the rhythm and sings out a refrain in which all the dancers join, beating their palms in time with the music. The tempo increases. The dancers as they pass round the circle alternately bow their heads, flex their knees, and touch the right hand to the floor, then snap erect, all in perfect time with the music. An elderly black woman emerges from a connecting-room and, shaking vigorously a *caxixi*, joins in the dance. With loud reports, rockets go off outside the *barracão*. Popcorn is then brought in and thrown over the dancers. The eyes of the initiates, who have also made part of the circle of dancers, are closed and remain closed throughout the ceremony. The shoulders of one *yand* jerk spasmodically, her head hangs limp and must be supported by other dancers.

Again the circle forms, and the *filhas*, singing at the top of their voices, shuffle forward in a half-stumbling movement, arms flexed at elbows and flapping up and down. An *ogan* says this dance is called *opanigé*. Sometime later, a *filha*, about forty-five years of age, suddenly sprawls stiff-legged on her hands and the tips of her toes, rapidly touches her forehead to the ground in front of the drums and shouts, "Hay-ee-ee," then leaps erect, jerks herself forward spasmodically, then repeats the performance. A girl joins the circle, wearing a pink and gold turban and carrying in her right hand a brass dagger eighteen inches long. Closing her eyes, she begins a wild dance, thrashing about with the dagger to right and to left. The tempo of the

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drums is accelerating. Another *filha*, a large but agile Negro woman, strikes out at the girl with her bare hands, and the two dance about, fighting a mock fight, while the beat of the drums becomes even more rapid and tumultuous until, just as the dancers close in upon one another where, it seems, harm might result, other *filhas* swing quickly in, catch each woman around the waist, and draw them apart, while the music slackens its tempo.

[535]

All the *filhas* begin to dance again, their arms swinging from side to side, the index finger of the right hand held closely pressing against the thumb of the left. The dancing is very animated. Suddenly, one of the *filhas*, her shoulders heaving violently back and forth, begins to sink upon her knees and, gradually lowering her heaving shoulders to the floor, turns over on her back, all the while keeping the index finger of her right hand firmly in contact with the thumb of her left. She then slowly rises, gets to her feet, and again joins the other *filhas*. An *ogan* says this dance is known as *ecô*.

[787]

The dances continue, rockets burst outside, confetti and flower petals are thrown over the initiates, and, at the insistent invocations of the drums and the spirited singing of the *filhas*, many *orixás* "arrive" and "take possession" of their human intermediaries.

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The primary social function which the *candomblé* appears to serve is that of reinforcing, by way of the collective experiences of ritual and ceremony, those attitudes and sentiments which distinguish the *Africanos* and their descendants from the European population and from the major portion of the mixed-bloods. By promoting a measure of solidarity and group consciousness, it tends to slow up the process of acculturation. At the same time cult experiences

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front of the Church of Bomfim, booths are erected, each of which has been named for the patron saint of the proprietor or bears an inscription like *Fé em Deus* ("Faith in God"), *Salve a Nova Aurora* ("Hail to the Dawn"), or *A Bahianinha* ("Dear Little Bahiana"). At these booths one may purchase such famous Bahian dishes of African origin as *aberém*, *carurú*, *valapá*, *efê*, and *acarajé*, as well as drinks and other refreshments. *Kermesses*, or small booths given over to games of chance similar to those of traveling "carnivals" in the United States, bear such names as *Lua Cheia* ("Full Moon") or *Abrigo dos Filhos do Povo* ("Shelter for the Children of the People"). A brass band, composed of blacks from the fire department in uniform, plays intermittently from a raised platform in the center of the square.

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At night the entire front of the church is ablaze with electric lights. Fireworks almost constantly sputter and bang in the air. An immense crowd mills about the *adro*, while other people sit at tables, eating, drinking, talking, and watching the festivities. About two hours after midnight, the *terno* of *Os Ciganos* ("the Gypsies") appears. It is a band of approximately thirty people, marching two abreast, ten musicians with brass instruments in the lead, followed by a dozen young men each of whom holds aloft a wooden staff branched at the top and lavishly decorated with paper flowers and Japanese lanterns, and an equal number of girls twelve to fourteen years old, dressed in gypsy costumes and shaking castanets and tambourines. After parading around the square, the *terno* halts in front of the church, greets the patron saint, then turns and ascends the platform vacated for this purpose by the band. The girls dance, sing, and play their instruments while one of the men performs a frenzied dance, twirling round and round a standard bearing the name and insignia of the terno.

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[SALVADOR]

* 563 /12 cont./
 829 from the word any pejorative meaning. In fact, to say a
 192 "mulatress" in speaking of a young girl of a certain social class
 826 is in a way less courteous than to say "a little mulatress" (una
mulatinha). Very often, in speaking of a person of distinction,
 one does not use any of these terms; one then says "a person of
 color" or "a /13/ dark person." A swarthy méris with slightly
 frizzy hair, whose features link him with the Whites, is a moreno,
 especially if he belongs to an upper social class. A journalist,
 recently describing a part of the city where a large number of
 colored people are found together, wrote that "one meets beauti-
 ful mulatresses there." If the latter belong to the lower classes
 and if they are poor, they are simply mulatresses; if they are
granfinas (1).

1. Granfino, granfina may be translated by "very
 refined."

they become light morenas; and one could even add morenas
 the color of jambo (2).

[824]

2. Jambo, fruit of the jambevio, a Myrtaceae
 (Eugenia sp.).

• [533] One finds numerous references to women of this type in the popular
 [54] songs launched on the occasion of the famous Brazilian carnival.
 [204] In the journals reporting accidents, crimes, or other facts in which
 mulattoes happen to be involved, even from the poorest classes,
 it is rare to come across the word mulatto, for which pardo or
 * 563 morena is preferred. The feminine form, moreover, has a senti-
 562 mental value: it suggests a slightly pigmented skin and features
 829 of a beauty peculiar to these "women so sought after and preferred
 192 in greater number," as one of our informants told us. Because of
 826 this preference, the morena type has been celebrated in prose and
 in verse by our writers. And this morena, it goes without saying,

[SALVADOR]

/62/

The Arts

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53 In Bahia the populace has its own art and its artists who interpret it according to their personal conception. And one may say that from this point of view there exists a form of art that is peculiar to poor and colored persons, especially in the realm of music and dance. But in the artistic activities of the higher stratum of the population, the participation of colored people is not important, except for music. Perhaps because of the belief that attributes to mulattoes a particular inclination for music, colored musicians are relatively numerous, and some of them enjoy a great deal of prestige and are admitted into the social scheme. In all the bands and in all the orchestras there is a large proportion of Blacks and mulattoes, sometimes even as soloists. Some of them engage in teaching and in this way reach a higher social rank when, thanks to their competence, they succeed in having pupils who belong to the wealthiest families and when they become part of the teaching corps of the most important schools of music.
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[555] Of three musicians, professors of piano and composition of Bahia, of great renown in the course of these last years, two are mulattoes. The most celebrated among them, after having very brilliantly concluded a course in Germany, taught for many years in Bahia; he then moved to another State; every time that he returns to his country he is the object of demonstrations of fellow-feeling; on these occasions numerous students or instrumentalists seek him out for short refresher courses. All Bahia is proud of the talents of this artist. Another mulatto, with the help of influential persons, organized a school of music which rapidly became very famous for the quality of its teaching and for the frequent concerts that it organized. After his death, the management of the school passed to his moreno son. The teaching of violin, which is at present done almost exclusively by men, includes numerous black or dark mulatto professionals; in the teaching of piano, an activity to a large extent engaged in by women, one finds morenas and "whitened" of great fame. A very popular singer of mixed blood is both founder and directress of an organization which, with the contribution of some thousands of adherents of the highest classes of
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[SALVADOR]

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* 563 society, has brought to Bahia the most famous musicians of our
545 time. The newspapers and journals report the concerts that the
• 533 white and colored artists give in the theaters and halls of the
[204] most important organizations of the city, and publish their /63/
pictures as well as the comments that the art critics make on the
subject.

* 563 In the plastic arts, colored persons have not played an im-
814 portant role, although in the past they have produced some painters
538 and sculptors of some renown whose works can be viewed in the
[532] most beautiful baroque churches of the city. These works are
[346] mentioned in the books on the art of Bahia, especially in those
of a black or dark mulatto writer, Manoel Querino, son of slaves,
whose studies on art, folklore, and Afro-Brazilian ethnography
have made him famous. The first centenary of the birth of this
intellectual, who in his biographies of numerous artists of Bahia
only very rarely indicated their type, was solemnly commemo-
rated in Bahia, as well as in Rio de Janeiro, at the same time
that two other folklorists, who were white, one of whom was from
Bahia, were honored.

* 563 In the school of fine arts of the local university, students of
873 all types have acquired university degrees in architecture, paint-
[875] ing, drawing, and sculpture; its teaching staff at present includes
at least three mulattoes, two of whom are quite dark. Some
informants say, however, that one painter, because of his color,
was not counted for a prize offered by the school, consisting of
a journey outside the State. This incident, which happened some
tens of years ago, is interpreted in different ways by our informants.

* 563 In the theater, colored persons (at least those who are very
545 dark) do not have great possibilities, and one often hears this
complaint expressed. The Blacks, says one young informant,
never get beyond the stage of laborer or carpenter in our theaters;
even for the roles of Blacks, disguised Whites are preferred. On
the other hand, a morena amateur actress states that white women
refuse to play the parts of Bahians and that they entrust these parts
[873] to colored girls. It is also somewhat difficult to present white and
colored actors together on the same stage, even in the theatrical

5: Azevedo--85 D, Z-5 (1951)1953 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

[Salvador]

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8. Composers of music.